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# Payroll jobs back below pre-pandemic level

Media Release

Released 7/10/2021

**Source:**

[Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia, Week ending 11 September 2021](#)

Payroll jobs fell by 0.7 per cent in the fortnight to 11 September 2021, following a larger fall of 1.5 per cent in the previous fortnight, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said: "The series of falls in payroll jobs through July, August and into September saw payroll jobs fall back below their pre-pandemic level (0.5 per cent below). Apart from the seasonal fall after Christmas, payroll jobs in mid-September 2021 were the lowest they had been in Australia since the end of August 2020, during the second wave lockdown in Victoria.

"Payroll jobs were below pre-pandemic levels in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, all of which had lockdowns in effect."

The Australian Capital Territory and Victoria saw the largest falls in payroll jobs during the fortnight to 11 September (down 2.3 per cent and 1.8 per cent). Given Victoria's large share of jobs in Australia, payroll job losses there accounted for almost three-quarters (71.8 per cent) of all jobs lost during the fortnight.

Payroll job losses slowed in New South Wales, falling by 0.3 per cent in the latest fortnight, compared with the 1.6 per cent fall in the previous fortnight.

"In recent weeks, people living in capital cities and surrounding areas were generally more impacted by payroll job losses than rural and regional areas. This was particularly true in Victoria, where payroll jobs in Greater Melbourne fell by 2.1 per cent, compared with a 1.1 per cent fall in the rest of Victoria," Mr Jarvis said.

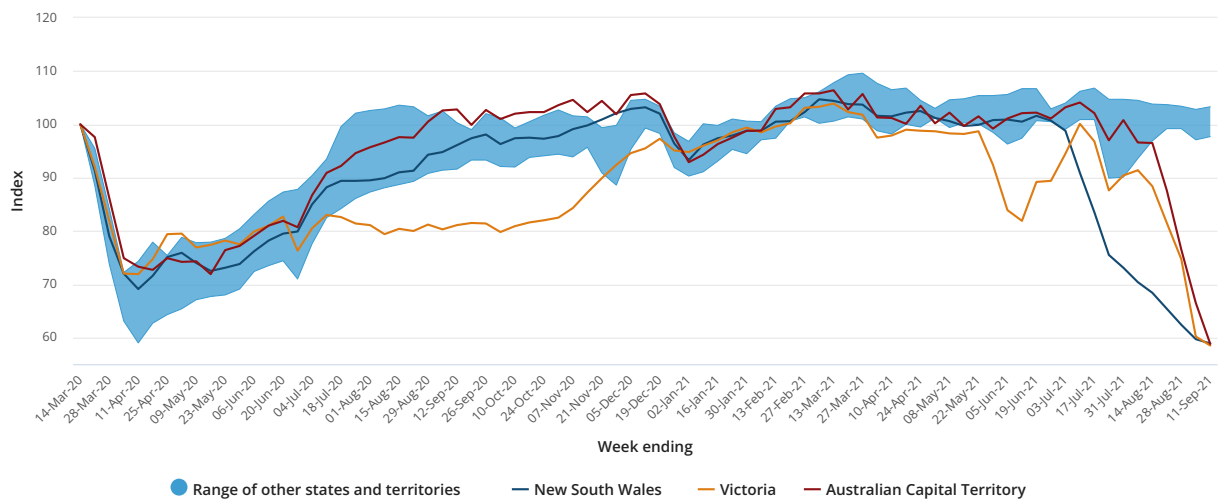
## Percentage change in payroll jobs in the fortnight to 11 September 2021, by Greater Capital City Statistical Area regions

Loading map...

The ACT only has one GCCSA region for the entire Territory.

“Nationally, most industries saw payroll job falls across the fortnight to 11 September. Arts and recreation services saw the largest fall in payroll jobs (down 7.4 per cent), driven by payroll job losses in this industry in Victoria (down 21.7 per cent),” Mr Jarvis said.

## Arts and recreation services payroll jobs index, by selected state (a)



a. Indexed to the week ending 14 March 2020

Payroll jobs in the Arts and recreation services industry accounted for 1.6 per cent of pre-pandemic jobs and have been the second most impacted industry across the pandemic. By 11 September 2021, payroll jobs in this industry were 23.6 per cent below its pre-pandemic level.

The Accommodation and food services industry continued to be the most impacted across the pandemic, with payroll jobs falling to 23.8 per cent below the pre-pandemic level by mid-September 2021. It was also one of the largest employing industries, accounting for 7.1 per cent of payroll jobs before the pandemic.

Current COVID-related government support payments are paid directly to people or businesses, rather than through payrolls, which can affect the comparison of payroll job falls over the pandemic.

Payroll jobs only include jobs where a person was paid through the payroll in a pay period. Some payroll job falls may include employees who remained attached to their job but were

temporarily stood down and not paid by their employer.

The ABS acknowledges the continued support from the Australian Taxation Office in enabling the ABS to produce weekly insights into the Australian labour market.

## Media notes

- While Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA) don't necessarily align with the areas covered by public health orders, they are similar enough to provide useful insights. GCCSA and substate data are available with each release, in Table 5.
- Payroll jobs are not seasonally adjusted, which generally requires at least three years of data. The seasonal changes accounted for in the longstanding Labour Force statistics series should be considered when interpreting impacts and recovery in employment statistics through the COVID-19 period.
- Payroll jobs are predominantly employee jobs paid through payrolls. Some industries, such as Agriculture, forestry and fishing and Construction have high proportions of owner managers. For more information, see the Scope and coverage section of the [Methodology \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-11-september-2021#how-data-are-collected\)](#) of this release.
- In each release, as more complete data are received, payroll jobs and wages estimates are revised. Fortnightly releases coinciding with the start of month involve higher rates of imputation for payroll jobs with monthly pay frequencies. This can contribute to greater revisions in subsequent releases. Industries with higher proportions of monthly pay frequencies, such as Mining, are particularly affected.
- While the ABS accounts for employees being paid with different frequencies, additional reporting activity may flow through to published estimates at some points of the year (such as the end of the financial year).
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